

TUG Board of Directors

Aston, 1993

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Abstract

The following are the loosely formulated issues as perceived by me. For more preciseness the reader is referred to the (approved) minutes.

My last BoD meeting for some time to come, with some ample sessions, before, during and aft the conference; you really need to be in good condition to work that all through! I always feel that it is too much—also because of how we run NTG, but that is a much smaller group—certainly with respect to the outcome. More or less the same outcome can be obtained with less, much less energy and more joy, more fun, if only

we dared to do less and trust the mandate style of working

giving people responsibility to work things out appropriately. If you look at the BoD members, then you can't deny that they all have responsible positions in their everyday jobs, so they are certainly able to work out things appropriately, once there is the feeling that somebody is counting on you. Hmmmm, I hope when I ever return to serve this board it will be in this spirit. Enough about that for now. Some real issues were at stake.

1 The big issues

As usual for any X-UG the issues to take care of are

- organizing meetings (Conference Planning Committee),
- having your publications etc. out in time, in agreement with your standards (Publications and Documentation Committee),
- plan ahead of time (Long Range Planning Committee),
- maintain, or even better increase, the number of memberships (Promotions Committee),
- have T_EXnical knowledge at the finger tips (Technical Council with its TWGs and SIGs)
- along with some other business, which can be easily approved by email once sensibly proposed¹

And...there is no deficit this year! The office is in capable hands. Let us support Pat with all we can offer, and give her the feeling that we really appreciate what she is doing, despite the difficulties she has to face in paying attention to all those different personalities, and personalities we are for sure!

¹We really should not waste our time on those trivia, where we all agree upon, because it does not really matter, or simply the proposals are as sensible as sensible could be. Of course now and then there are hot potatoes, but then they need to be prepared by some of us off-line. Such a waste to try for the end run in full BoD.

1.1 Conference planning

The committee got a big hand for their work on looking well ahead and their sensible plans: some rotation scheme for the TUG meetings. West coast USA, East Coast, and Europe, something like that. That was not the only point addressed, also the candidate sites have been solicited to make their intentions clear, again well ahead of time. So next year it will be Santa Barbara, California, and for '95 the working idea is Florida, and so on. Also attention was paid to protecting new and enthusiastic users from taking too much of a burden—when they volunteer for organizing a meeting—by providing a list of things which deserve attention, and will consume ample time. So the potential organizers will know what is likely to lay ahead of them. Know what will be expected from them. On the other hand the sites are supported by experience gained from the past via checklists about

How to run a TUG conference,
What to do When, by Whom,
and Who to cooperate with.

Really simple, but nevertheless a thrill, and I'm happy that this is in the open now, and perhaps something for other LUGs to borrow from. For example when organizing the European meetings.

Thanks Jackie, Anita, Robert, Mimi, and Mimi, and all those involved. A great job! Real leadership.

1.2 Long range planning

Joachim Lammarsch heads this committee and is therefore in a key position to come out with sensible things. Although not all the committee members could make it for Aston, we agreed upon—whatever the outcome—that there should be a report available next year, with at least attention paid to

(All)T_EX and its possible future,
TUG and LUGs, how to cooperate and the total organizational structure.

Details such as the status of the special directors of TUG will hopefully be handled as a trivial consequence of the main ideas.

Furthermore, I think we should look after a structure which does not matter much, no matter how paradoxically that may sound. The whole organization and the contacts must not critically depend on it. If so, it is wrong. Make it simple and workable! Let it serve the purpose: we all love (All)T_EX, that is at the heart.² The TUG mission statement might be too strong a requirement to fulfill by beginning LUGs, even NTG. You can't simply organize perfection, things will go wrong, that is not the issue. How we cope with things done differently from your style, that is the big deal—call it tolerance, respect, open-mindedness, non-discrimination. . .—and has all to do with human relationships. There is no other graceful way, I'm sure.

As said earlier in 'Van de voorzitter. . .' I'm much in favour of the federation structure, leaving room for minorities to expose their creativity, with a more than honorary place for TUG in there.

History has it that new groups discover dark corners, stress unnoticed aspects, and so on. It makes it all so colourful, creative, and captivating.

2 Public Relations

Apart from the usual nice things like T-shirts, mugs, and other gadgets, a great willingness was on the air to encourage the increase of the organized T_EX users all over the globe, not least of which TUG members. This all by strategical means. One thing is especially captivating: low-budget courses, not to make money of course, but to invest in your membership, such that they can do their jobs at home more easily and of higher quality. If we really succeed in that, the membership will rise sky high, because that is what we are all after

to do our job to live better, more easily, and of higher quality with more fun.

If only (All)T_EX, and TUG/LUGs, could make this happen. . . It is all on the air, and things are going to happen for sure.

3 T_EXnical Council

This council is active and works steadily behind the scenes. It started with the DC fonts (Stanford and finished at Cork), with now the multi-lingual issues at the heart to pay attention to. But there is more going on for sure, only God knows where. In the daily *TUGly Telegraph* during the conference Michael Ferguson outlined the organizational structure. Simple and sensible, see elsewhere in this MAPS, for that report.

4 Some other business

Next to the above highlights the 'Knuth Scholarship' procedures have been widened up to allow also non-TUG members, read all T_EX users, to participate. Sensible! The election process for the BoD has been changed to be more in agreement with what we have adopted since we started

gradual re-elections for neither too short nor too long a period of time: a three-year period of office. For the detailed rules see TTN.³

5 What can I do? What shall I say?

The *exchange of information* between TUG and emerging LUGs via for example exchanging TUGboat with the LUG's bulletin is a fact of late!⁴ This will make TUG the spider in the Web, the central organization. NTG is very grateful for having a complete set of TUGBoats available at the library of the University of Groningen, open for the community at large to profit from, thanks to TUG, especially Christina Thiele (and myself), being aware of the strategic importance.

To participate in the meetings,
to get the most out of it, to communicate,
to share all the goodies with the folks at home.

Hang on, many good things are bound to happen; the priorities will fall into the right place.

TUG, and the LUGs, are going up again,
. . . together!

5.1 A helping hand. . .

With respect to TUGboat the big problem is the workload. Pondering about it, while realizing the availability of only a few volunteers,⁵ we need to think of new and effective ways. Barbara indicated that the handling of the referee-author interaction was half of the work, next to coping with new challenges posed by authors in T_EXnical typography. If so authors, what about the following?

Before submitting an article consult a friend!

The articles submitted in this way are of higher quality to start with, they run to say the very least. More likely than not, they contain fewer typos, and at least one reader is pleased by it.

Acknowledgement

I'm pleased to acknowledge the help of Christina Thiele in adjusting the contents and improving the English. Thanks Christina!

²Without T_EX there would not have been X-UGs!

³TTN 2, 3: 23–25.

⁴On my mind ever since Paris and Stanford '89.

⁵If you feel you can contribute, contact Barbara, or any BoD member, if not NTG's board. A helping hand is always welcome!